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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9458
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHMFIISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

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STATE FOR SCA/CEN, DS/IP/SCA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/01/2017

TAGS: PGOV PREL ASEC TX

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN FOREIGN MINISTER: GIVE US MORE TIME
ON SURVEILLANCE DETECTION

Classified By: CHARGE RICHARD E HOAGLAND FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (S) Charge met with Foreign Minister Rashit Meredov September 28 for a read-out of President Berdimuhamedov's September 23-27 visit to New York (septel). At the end of the meeting, Charge asked Meredov to dismiss his notetaker, as is normal practice for this issue, and raised the U.S. strong desire to reinstitute the banned U.S. Embassy's Surveillance Detection Program. Charge noted we have followed the letter of the law, and President Berdimuhamedov's suggestion, and provided the Government of Turkmenistan with a draft Memorandum of Understanding to regulate this program that is essential for the security of Embassy Ashgabat and its employees. He noted Kyrgyzstan had also stopped our equivalent program in Bishkek, but had found a way to begin to reinstitute it.

¶2. (S) Meredov replied, "I think we can do this, but you have no idea how difficult it is. There are strong forces against you to preserve our stability. Give us more time." He asked for at least two more weeks before we revisit the issue for the Government of Turkmenistan to get past the next wave of high-level visits (Russia and the European Union) and President Berdimuhamedov's trip to Dushanbe for a bilateral visit and CIS meetings. Charge agreed, but noted we would continue to raise this issue until it is resolved. He said it is a serious and unnecessary irritant in the generally positive new bilateral U.S.-Turkmenistan relationship. He emphasized we firmly believe the program can be reinstated in full compliance with Turkmenistan's laws.

HOAGLAND